



# ESSEX COUNTY News

SPRING ISSUE

MARCH 2005

## ~ 2005 County Budget Approved ~

**C**OUNTY COUNCIL APPROVED the Corporation's 2005 Budget at the annual budget meeting on February 16, 2005. The Corporation's gross expenditures for 2005 amount to \$92,214,650, up from \$86 million in the prior year. The amount to be levied from the seven lower tier municipalities increased by a \$3.3 million from 2004, with an approved net operating requirement of \$56,931,190.

Mitigating the impact of the \$3.3 million or 6.2% net increase in the County's requirement is a 2.75% increase in weighted assessment in the County of Essex, resulting in a net 3.3% increase in tax rates for 2005. The impact of a 3.3% tax rate increase (County portion) on a \$200,000 home is estimated at \$24.67. Approximately 1/3 of a homeowner's taxes support County operations.

For 2005, there are a number of key operating conditions impacting the year-over-year increase in net operating expenditures. Approximately 3.7% (60%) of the increase result from programs, expenditures and external commitments beyond the control of Council, with 2.5% of the levy increase resulting from direct operating departmental budgets.

The most significant variables impacting on the 2005 Budget include:

- Increased cost of providing social assistance and social housing
- Increase in cost sharing for Economic Development with the City of Windsor
- Increased cost of property assessment services
- Increased share of costs for regionally

delivered services due to greater assessment growth in the County than in the City

- Continued commitment to road reconstruction with reduced dependence on reserves
- Increase in Health & Dental benefit premiums
- Additional land ambulance costs to address increased transfers to London (re: reduction in availability of local health services), Code 7's and Walker Road reconstruction
- General inflationary increases including staff wages and benefits
- Inadequate provincial funding to cover increased costs of delivering Land Ambulance services and services to residents at the Sun Parlor Home

Also included in the 2005 Budget are continued long-term funding commitments to the University of Windsor, St. Clair College, Hospice and the Together in Caring campaign.

The 2005 Budget includes very modest service delivery expansions for the Home for the Aged (offset by increased provincial funding), Library Services and Transportation Services. These service delivery expansions are considered the minimum requirements necessary to narrow the gap between actual service levels provided and provincially mandated or municipally determined service levels.

### WARDEN MICHAEL RAYMOND ELECTED CHAIR OF WESTERN ONTARIO WARDENS' CAUCUS

**A**T A MEETING held on February 20, 2005, Essex County Warden Michael Raymond was elected Chair of Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC) for 2005. In addition, by virtue of this election, Warden Ray-

mond was also appointed to the Board of Directors of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). The Caucus is comprised of fifteen members including twelve Western Ontario counties and three single-tier municipalities.

The Caucus is actively engaged in identifying emerging municipal issues across Western Ontario and ensuring that the impact of these issues are understood and appreciated by the Provincial Government and AMO. At a recent visioning session, WOWC identified the development of fair, equitable and sustainable funding for municipalities and the resolution of a variety of financial and operational issues related to the provision of land ambulance services as its top priorities for 2005.

### CAO ELECTED AS CHAIR OF WEDNET BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**A**T IT'S FEBRUARY 1, 2005 meeting, the Windsor Essex Development Network (WEDnet) Board of Directors elected Brian Gregg, Chief Administrative Officer, as Chair for the 2005/06 term. The vision of WEDnet is to research and apply technology resources by extending, implementing, evaluating and maintaining selected aspects of an advanced operational computer network, in a multi-sectoral public and private partnership approach. The goal of

WEDnet is to establish Essex-Windsor as a Smart Community – that is, a community that engages in the use of electronic service delivery to effect the way citizens work, learn, live and play.

One such example is the Connecting Windsor-Essex community portal. By accessing any one of the portal's theme areas, residents, visitors or organizations can have access to a broad array of community information and are provided with an opportunity to plan events or keep in touch with members of the many community groups across Essex-Windsor. The portal can be accessed at [www.windsor-essex.info](http://www.windsor-essex.info).

Having a County representative participate on the WEDnet Board of Directors will provide the County with a voice in determining and influencing the scope and speed of the Smart Community evolution in Essex-Windsor.



**Connecting  
Windsor-Essex  
@ The Speed of Life!**

### MOHLTC PROVIDES ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO SUN PARLOR HOME

**T**HE SUN PARLOUR Home is having an exciting start to this year. In addition to continually striving to improve our services to our residents, the Home is fortunate to have received \$110,000 from the Ministry of Health for the purchase of resident lifts. In addition, the Ministry is also providing \$107,000 to purchase diagnostic and other equipment in the Home. The Management Team has worked hard to establish what type of equipment to purchase that will improve resident comfort, dignity and enhance skin and wound care. Staff are excited about the new shower chairs that have recently been introduced at the Home which will allow residents more independence in the shower while providing safety.

Our Palliative Care Team is to be commended and congratulated for their work in this area. As a result of our Team's innovative ideas, the Sun Parlor Home has been selected as the lead organization to apply for a grant to The Change Founda-

tion and the Ministry of Health LTC Nursing Secretariat regarding innovation in nursing practice and guidelines for end of life care in long term care settings. This type of leading edge research and education is something that the Sun Parlor Home is proud to be part of. We hope that the Change Foundation recognizes the importance of this initiative by funding the grant application.

Our creative Life Enrichment Department has introduced an exciting list of new programs, some of which include domestic type fun events, drive-in movie matinees, increased spa service, aroma therapy and hand massage and men only events. Also, in conjunction with the Dietary Department, we just completed a year of cultural celebrations which included many ethnic foods and events and that both staff and residents enjoyed together.

Stay tuned for more....the Home is in the midst of renovations, updating and planning for the future.

### NEW PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT (PPS) CHANGE LAND USE PLANNING RULES IN ONTARIO

**T**HE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT is setting clear ground rules for how Ontario communities will grow and prosper. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing recently announced the enactment of the new Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) that sets out what communities all across Ontario should look like. The new PPS was developed after extensive consultations with the public and stakeholders across the province. It includes policies that will support long-term planning for alternative and renewable energy sources, discourage urban sprawl, support the protection of Ontario's environment, promote the development of more affordable housing and support and protect rural areas. By setting out the broad policy direction for planning decisions province-wide, the PPS also lays the groundwork for other government initiatives such as the Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt, the "Places to Grow" plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and source water protection.

Issued under the authority of Section 3 of the *Planning Act*, the new PPS took effect March 1, 2005. This coincides with the effective

date of Section 2 of the Strong Communities (Planning Amendment) Act, 2004, which requires that planning decisions "shall be consistent with" the new policies, as opposed to the old requirement of "shall have regard to". County and local Official Plans are the most important vehicle for implementation of the PPS.

The *Planning Act* sets out the ground rules for land-use planning in Ontario, describes how land uses may be controlled and identifies provincial interests in land-use planning. The PPS provides further detail and direction on provincial interests identified in the Act. The PPS plays a key role in Ontario's planning system by providing the policy foundation necessary to guide the development and use of land. It is the basis of the province's policy-led planning system, and supports the provincial goal of strong, livable and healthy communities.

The PPS provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land-use planning and development, such as managing growth, efficient use of land and protecting resources such as prime agricultural lands, water and significant natural features. The new PPS includes policies that will:

- Support long-term planning for alternative and renewable energy sources such as wind power;
- Discourage urban sprawl across Ontario by supporting intensification in appropriate areas and the efficient use of land and resources;
- Support the protection of Ontario's environment through enhanced policies, including stronger protection of the province's water resources consistent with recommendations of the Walkerton Enquiry in advance of upcoming source water protection;
- Protect more strongly the province's natural heritage resources including habitats, provincially significant wetlands on the Canadian Shield and coastal wetlands;
- Promote development of affordable housing by requiring municipal targets;
- Respond to concerns about the loss of farmland, by prohibiting retire-

ment lots and residential infilling on prime agricultural lands;

- Support and protect rural areas, by allowing development that is in keeping with the unique character of rural Ontario.

As noted above, the government has chosen the "shall be consistent with" standard to ensure that provincial interests remain an essential part of decision-making in land-use planning. The new standard is a stronger test than the previous "shall have regard to" standard for implementing the policy statement. When exercising any authority that affects a planning matter, decision-makers need to ensure their decisions are consistent with the PPS.

The "shall be consistent with" standard applies to all policies in the PPS. Examples of key policy directions in the new PPS include:

- Managing growth in settlement areas, by requiring intensification and redevelopment and allowing boundary expansions only after comprehensive municipal review
- Further promoting intensification and use of brownfields by allowing municipalities to permit/facilitate all forms of residential intensification and redevelopment and to plan the infrastructure to support priority growth areas
- Supporting transit-friendly land-use patterns, such as promoting the use of lands already serviced by transit and a mix of uses, e.g., residential and commercial uses, to minimize the number and length of vehicle trips
- Protecting employment lands, by ensuring an adequate supply of land to accommodate long-term needs, e.g., for industrial, commercial and other employment uses
- Promoting better air quality and energy conservation, by supporting alternative energy systems and conservation
- Requiring municipalities to set minimum targets for affordable housing for low and moderate income households
- Preserving greenspace, by protecting more significant natural heritage features including coastal wetlands and habitat of endangered and threatened species

- Better protecting agriculture, by including stricter criteria for the removal of these lands from prime agricultural areas and by limiting non-agricultural lot creation
- Better protecting specialty croplands, including tender fruit and grape lands, by prohibiting urban expansion and limiting non-agricultural lot creation in these areas.

Copies of the new PPS are available from Publications Ontario Bookstore, 880 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8, 416-325-5300, 1-800-668-9938, or you may visit the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing website at [www.mah.gov.on.ca](http://www.mah.gov.on.ca).

## LIBRARY NEWS

**T**HE RELOCATION OF the Essex Branch to the former Holy Name School facility is anticipated to take place in the fall of 2005, following renovations to the interior of the building. The Library Board included a \$250,000 provision in the 2005 budget for the capital cost of furnishings, shelving and equipment for the new location.

The 2005 Library Budget was approved by County Council on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005. The Library Board's 2005 budget reflects an increase in the per capita amount spent on books by 38 cents to \$3.75 in accordance with the Board's approved policy. Other factors contributing to the increase of \$200,500 in the 2005 Library Budget are wage and benefit increases, additional expenditures for library materials and increased operating and capital expenses.

The Library continues to introduce new technology that will enhance service and reduce expenditures. Automated calling for first overdue notices was implemented in mid-January replacing the mailing of these notices. Final notices are still sent by mail.

Due to the high demand of internet usage at the Leamington Branch, additional work stations are being installed this. This should eliminate the wait patrons at the Leamington Branch have been experiencing to access a computer.

"Bug Break" was the theme for the March Break programs which took place in the branches March 14 - 18 for children ages 4 - 6 and 7 & up.

In addition, some branches hosted professional performances by Beebo, Mad Science and the Windsor Symphony.

## CANADIAN FORCES LIAISON COUNCIL PROVINCIAL AWARD

**A**t a ceremony held in Toronto on February 11, 2005, the County of Essex received an **Award of Excellence in Employer Support** in the **Government** category from the Canadian Forces Liaison Council.

The Council is a group of civilian business people who volunteer their time to promote the primary Reserve Force and the value of military training in the civilian workplace. The Council encourages civilian employers to grant time off to reservists so that they can keep up with their military activities. Under its Awards Program the Council formally recognizes and rewards the contribution of employers who actively support reservists. The Government category is one of ten categories in which provincial awards were conferred.

The County of Essex has adopted a Military Leave Policy that allows reservists to take a leave of ten working days during a calendar year and provides for the continuance of regular wages during the leave period. The reservist is responsible to reimburse the County for compensation received from the Department of National Defence.

The County of Essex was nominated for this prestigious award by Phil Berthiaume, Emergency Management Coordinator, who also serves as Commanding Officer of the Essex and Kent Scottish Regiment. The County of Essex is honoured to have its support of the Reserve Force recognized on a province-wide basis.

## DON SHABAN RETIRING

**D**ON SHABAN, MANAGER of Human Resources is retiring from the County of Essex at the end of March 2005. Don began his employment with the County in 1989 following several years in the automotive industry.

## From The Desk Of The County Emergency Management Coordinator

**T**HE INITIAL SUCCESS of any Community Emergency Management Program is directly related to the clear identification and definition of the major risks that might threaten the community, closely followed by an established public alerting framework that can provide our residents and businesses with both timely warning of an emergency event and the action to be taken to ensure personal safety and the protection of resources. Unfortunately, the “bad news” reality is that there is not one single public alerting or emergency notification system by itself that can effectively provide the warnings and information for all events all of the time. Fortunately, with the exchange of emergency warning best practices information at two national Public Alerting Forums held in Ottawa over the past 18 months, there has been a universal acceptance at the municipal, provincial, federal and private sector levels for a national emergency notification system framework that incorporates a wide range of systems and capabilities, ranging from sirens, wireless in-home devices, internet alerts, auto-dial telephone notifications, media broadcasts and extensive message scrolling inserts for televisions.

Under the sponsorship of Industry Canada, and in cooperation with the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, emergency management representa-

tives from a number of municipalities, the provinces and territories, private sector and federal departments from across the country have recently developed a draft “Vision of Public Alerting in Canada” that not only identifies the various technologies and methods available to support emergency notifications but also establishes national standards for public alerting procedures and recognizes the immediate requirement for a national public alerting network that will assist municipalities across the nation. An examination and recognition of public alerting best practices now available or under development in both Canada and the United States is key to the establishment of North American standards.

Emergency notification and public alerting in Essex County has traditionally consisted of sirens in some high-risk areas, door-to-door notifications and mail outs (such as recent boil water advisories), media announcements, and telephone notifications through the Essex County *Reverse 911* systems. Despite initial reliability problems with the telephone listings data bases, the current, ongoing updates to both the commercially-acquired telephone listings data base and the municipal mapping underlays that permit us to issue specific warnings to specific neighbourhoods and areas have resulted in more than 50,000 residential and business records being geo-coded, with more inputs and upgrades being completed daily with the outstanding assistance of our municipal and County GIS technicians and Information Technology staffs, as well as the large number of individual forms submitted by residents and businesses with ei-

ther unlisted numbers, “Do Not Solicit” subscriptions or recent address/telephone number changes. As we “fine-tune” the capabilities, accessibilities and operating protocols of our *Reverse 911* systems, we can also anticipate the near-future impact on public alerting in our region with the improvements to Environment Canada’s Weather Network system, with marked improvements to the commercially available severe weather warning radios, combined with a new generation of television sets that will already be programmed to provide you with local severe weather warnings (whether your television is turned on or not), expanded capabilities of an All Channel Alert system, and expanded public broadcast warning capabilities currently being trialed by the CBC. Add to all of these warning devices and capabilities recent internet public alerting field trials and it should be safe to assume that there is no where and no time that we cannot be contacted through a sophisticated, yet simple, public alerting network that now ranges from sirens, door-to-door notices, telephone/cellular calls, television, newsprint and radio, e-mail, laptops, desktops and any other communication devices.

Further details on this topic, or other Emergency Management Program topics, can be requested by contacting Phil Berthiaume, *Emergency Management Coordinator*, at 519-776-6441, extension 243 or e-mail

[pberthiaume@countyofessex.on.ca](mailto:pberthiaume@countyofessex.on.ca).

During the past sixteen years, Don has guided the County’s labour relations efforts through a host of collective agreement negotiations and has been instrumental in introducing a variety of workplace-related



policies and practices. Over the years, Don has also assisted a number of local municipalities and agencies connected with the County with labour negotiations and associated labour relations matters. In addition, local community organizations have benefited from Don’s participation, as he has routinely freely given of his time to an array of worthy causes.

Don is an avid golfer and will no doubt have little difficulty keeping active during the upcoming summer months. Thank you Don for your contribution to the County of Essex and best wishes for a lengthy, happy and healthy retirement!

<b>Administration</b> Brian Gregg Chief Administrative Officer 776-6441 Ext.325	<b>Corporate Services</b> Rob Maisonneville Dir. Of Corporate Services/Treasurer 776-6441 Ext. 328	<b>Council Services</b> Mary Brennan Dir. of Council Services/Clerk 776-6441 Ext. 335	<b>Human Resources</b> Don Shaban Manager 776-6441 Ext. 322	<b>Engineering and Roads</b> Tom Bateman County Engineer 776-6441 Ext 316	<b>Essex County Library</b> Ed George Chief Librarian 776-5241 Ext. 3	<b>Sun Parlour Home for the Aged</b> Bill MacDonald Administrator 326-5731 Ext. 223	<b>Land Ambulance</b> Brian Bildfell Director of Land Ambulance Services 776-6441 Ext. 300	<b>Planning</b> Bill King Manager of Planning Services 776-6441 Ext 329
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